

1997

Possible Cuban Involvement in Subversive Activity in Venezuela

Fabricio Ojeda, a leftist Venezuelan political leader who has spent considerable time in Cuba since late 1959, is organizing a coup attempt against President Betancourt's coalition with the support of Cuban officials, according to an unevaluated source within the Cuban Government. Cuba reportedly has arranged to supply arms and training facilities for Venezuelans. The move may be timed to exploit the current political tension in Venezuela and the threat to the coalition arising from Foreign Minister Arcaya's refusal--in opposition to his government's policy--to sign the resolution adopted by the OAS foreign ministers in San Jose against extracontinental intervention in the hemisphere. A series of pro-Castro demonstrations have already erupted in Venezuela apparently in support of Arcaya, who, like Ojeda, is a member of the Democratic Republican Union, a staunch pro-Castro party which is a dissatisfied component of the coalition.

Venezuela, which has the largest US investment--about three billion dollars--of any Latin American country and has a large leftist element, is a logical target of Castro's anti-US program in the area. Castro has maintained close liaison with a large number of Venezuelan dissident leaders--including Communists and the Marxist element which defected from Betancourt's own Democratic Action party--possibly with the ultimate objective of overthrowing Betancourt, who is hostile toward him. A Cuban national, favorable to the Cuban regime, recently informed a US official that Castro had sponsored in early 1960 a paramilitary training program for Venezuelan leftists who are to play a role in a future move against Betancourt. A prominent Venezuelan newsman recently wrote that Castro was bribing Venezuelan journalists and organizing "a powerful army within Venezuela" to promote a Castro-style coup. Betancourt's press secretary advised the US Embassy in Caracas in August that a top Venezuelan Communist had received \$500,000 from Cuba to convert the party's weekly paper into a daily. [REDACTED]

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